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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 92nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 14 September 1992, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia)

- Hurricanes in the United States of America and earthquake and tidal waves in Nicaragua

- Adoption of the agenda and organization of work: letter from the Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples [8] (continued)

- Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments [18] (continued)

  (g) Appointment of members of the Joint Inspection Unit: note by the President

  (k) Appointment of members of the International Civil Service Commission

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- The situation in Central America: threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives [31] (continued)

- Question of Palestine [33] (continued)

- The situation in the Middle East [35] (continued)

- Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa [37] (continued)

- Armed Israeli aggression against the Iraqi nuclear installations and its grave consequences for the established international system concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and international peace and security [42] (continued)

- Question of Cyprus [45]

- Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait [46]

- Special eocnomic and disaster relief assistance [84] (continued)

- Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations [105] (continued)

- Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 [107] (continued)

- Current financial crisis of the United Nations [109] (continued)

- Financial emergency of the United Nations [110] (continued)

- Personnel questions [115]

- Financing of the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group [119]

- Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission [120] (continued)

- Financing of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group [121]

- Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations [123]

- Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara [138]

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- Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly [144] (continued)

- The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti [145] (continued)

- Financing of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia [148] (continued)

- Floods in Pakistan

- Closing address by the President

- Minute of silent prayer or meditation [2] (continued)

- Closure of the session

The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

HURRICANES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND EARTHQUAKE AND TIDAL WAVES IN NICARAGUA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Before turning to the items on our agenda for this morning, may I, on behalf of all the members of the Assembly, extend to the Government and the people of the United States of America, recently struck by hurricanes, and to the Government and the people of Nicaragua, recently struck by an earthquake and tidal waves, our deepest sympathy at these major disasters that have caused tragic loss of life and extensive material damage.

May I also express the hope that the international community will show its solidarity and respond promptly and generously to any request for help.

I call on the representative of the United States of America.

Mr. PERKINS (United States of America): Thank you very much, Mr. President, for your thoughtful expression of sympathy for the unfortunate victims in south Florida, who suffered so tragically from the effects of Hurricane Andrew. Natural disasters may strike anywhere. Their paths of destruction do not differentiate among the nations of the world.

I should like to express my own heartfelt condolences to those families of the Pacific coast of Nicaragua whose lives were devastated by the earthquake-driven tidal wave that struck so suddenly and so destructively.

It helps make clear to us all the forces that are beyond our control, except in so far as we can relieve the suffering. In this light, the United Nations has increasingly demonstrated its willingness to deal more comprehensively with the destructive forces that it is within our power to control. The United States, along with our gratitude for the sympathy of the Assembly, has a sense of pride in being a part of this great enterprise of the United Nations.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I call on the representative of Nicaragua.

Mr. VILCHEZ ASHER (Nicaragua) (interpretation from Spanish): I am grateful for your words, Mr. President, and for the support and solidarity shown to Nicaragua in its hour of pain by the Members of the United Nations, by the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, and by other international humanitarian organizations. Without the help of the international community, the consequences of the tidal wave and earthquake that struck the Pacific coast of my country would have been far worse. With the assistance we have received, we are embarking on the task of reconstruction in the affected areas.

On behalf of my delegation I should like once again to thank the international community for their help.

We wish also to express our solidarity with the people of the United States of America with respect to the damage and destruction caused by Hurricane Iniki in Hawaii, as well as for the ordeal suffered in the states of Florida and Louisiana.

AGENDA ITEM 8 (continued)

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK: LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (A/46/961)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Before proceeding with the closure of the forty-sixth session, the General Assembly will consider a request contained in document A/46/961, as well as the items retained on its agenda.

(The President)

The Assembly will first turn its attention to document A/46/961, which contains a letter addressed to me by the Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

Our attention is drawn to the English version of the nomenclature of item 100 of the provisional agenda of the forty-seventh session. The Special Committee decided to add the word "those" after the words "Activities of" and to replace the words "which are impeding" with the words "which impede".

May I take it that the Assembly agrees, therefore, that the Enqlish version of item 100 of the provisional agenda of the forty-seventh session will read "Activities of those foreign economic and other interests which impede the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in Territories under colonial domination and efforts to eliminate colonialism, apartheid and racial discrimination in southern Africa"?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): That change will be reflected in the draft agenda of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

AGENDA ITEM 18 (continued)

APPOINTMENTS TO FILL VACANCIES IN SUBSIDIARY ORGANS AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS

(g) APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: NOTE BY THE PRESIDENT (A/46/742/Add.1)

(k) APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I invite members to turn their attention to agenda item 18 (g), entitled "Appointment of members of the Joint Inspection Unit".

(The President)

In that connection, a note has been circulated as document A/46/742/Add.1. As indicated in that document, as a result of further consultations in accordance with article 3, paragraph 2 of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, including consultations with the President of the Economic and Social Council and with the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, I now submit the following list of candidates to the Assembly for appointment as members of the Joint Inspection Unit for a term of office commencing 1 January 1993 and expiring on 31 December 1997: Mr. Fatih Bouayad-Agha of Algeria; Mr. Homero Luis Hernandez Sanchez of the Dominican Republic; Mr. Francesco Mezzalama of Italy; Mr. Khalil Issa Othman of Jordan; and Mr. Boris Krasulin of the Russian Federation.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to appoint those candidates?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 18 (g).

We turn next to agenda item 18 (k), concerning the appointment of members of the International Civil Service Commission.

Representatives may recall that the Assembly, by its decisions 46/323 A of 14 February 1992 and 46/323 B of 2 March 1992, appointed a total of three persons as members of the International Civil Service Commission. As representatives know, the sub-item concerning the appointment of members of the International Civil Service Commission has been included in the provisional agenda of the forty-seventh session of the Assembly.

(The President)

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion of this sub-item at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): That concludes our consideration of agenda item 18 (k)

AGENDA ITEM 31 (continued)

THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA: THREATS TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY AND PEACE INITIATIVES

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members may recall that the Assembly has adopted resolutions 46/109 A and B of 17 December 1991 on this item. As members know, the item on the situation in Central America has been included in the provisional agenda of the forty-seventh session of the Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion of this item at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): That concludes our consideration of agenda item 31.

AGENDA ITEM 33 (continued)

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members may recall that the Assembly has adopted resolutions 46/74 A to C, 46/75 and 46/76 of 11 December 1991 on this item. As members know, the item on the question of Palestine has been included in the provisional agenda of the forty-seventh session of the Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion of this item at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): That concludes our consideration of agenda item 33.

AGENDA ITEM 35 (continued)

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members may recall that the Assembly has adopted resolutions 46/82 A and B of 16 December 1991 on this item. As members know, the item on the situation in the Middle East has been included in the provisional agenda of the forty-seventh session of the Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion of this item at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): That concludes our consideration of agenda item 35.

AGENDA ITEM 37 (continued)

POLICIES OF APARTHEID OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members may recall that the Assembly has adopted resolutions 46/79 A to F of 13 December 1991. As members know, the item on the policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa has been included in the provisional agenda of the forty-seventh session of the Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion of this item at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): That concludes our consideration of agenda item 37.

AGENDA ITEM 42 (continued)

ARMED ISRAELI AGGRESSION AGAINST THE IRAQI NUCLEAR INSTALLATIONS AND ITS GRAVE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ESTABLISHED INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM CONCERNING THE PEACEFUL USES OF NUCLEAR ENERGY, THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members may recall that on 20 September 1991 the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, and that on 20 December 1991 it further decided to defer consideration of this item to a later date during this session and to include it in the draft agenda of the forty-seventh session.

Thus we have concluded our consideration of agenda item 42.

AGENDA ITEM 45

QUESTION OF CYPRUS

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members may recall that on 20 September 1991 the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session, but deferred a decision on the allocation of the item to an appropriate time during the session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the forty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): That concludes our consideration of agenda item 45.

AGENDA ITEM 46

CONSEQUENCES OF THE IRAQI OCCUPATION OF AND AGGRESSION AGAINST KUWAIT

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members may recall that on 20 September 1991 the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the forty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): That concludes our consideration of agenda item 46.

AGENDA ITEM 84 (continued)

SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members may recall that the Assembly has adopted resolutions 46/170 to 46/179 of 19 December 1991, 46/234 of 13 April 1992 and 46/239 of 22 May 1992. As members know, the item on special economic and disaster relief assistance has been included in the provisional agenda of the forty-seventh session of the Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion of this item at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): That concludes our consideration of agenda item 84.

AGENDA ITEM 105 (continued)

REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members may recall that the Assembly has adopted resolutions 46/220 of 20 December 1991 and 46/232 of 2 March 1992. As members know, this item has been included in the provisional agenda of the forty-seventh session of the Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion of this item at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): That concludes our consideration of agenda item 105.

AGENDA ITEM 107 (continued)

PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members may recall that the Assembly has adopted resolutions 46/185 A to C, 46/186 A to C, 46/187 and 46/188 of 20 December 1991. As members know, the item has been included in the provisional agenda of the forty-seventh session of the Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion of this item at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): That concludes our consideration of agenda item 107.

AGENDA ITEMS 109 AND 110 (continued)

CURRENT FINANCIAL CRISIS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

FINANCIAL EMERGENCY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members may recall that on 20 September 1991 the Assembly decided to include these items in the agenda of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Members may further recall that on 4 December 1991 the Assembly considered the report of the Secretary-General on the financial situation of the United Nations.

During the session, delegations have made statements on these items in plenary meetings and in the Fifth Committee. Consultations held in the Fifth Committee were inconclusive largely due to pressure of time.

In an effort to achieve progress on this very important matter, I convened a meeting of a number of delegations at the ambassadorial level. That group engaged in exchanges of views on the proposals made by the Secretary-General in document A/46/600 and Add.1. Delegations also explored other possible approaches.

During consultations on the difficult financial situation facing the United Nations, there was general agreement that the surest way of improving the fiscal health of the Organization is for Member States to improve the pattern of payments of contributions.

While the consultations have not reached the point where a decision can be taken, at this stage indications are that further discussion will lead to success. I therefore propose that these items be deferred for continued consideration at the forty-seventh session.

(The President)

May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of these items and to include them in the draft agenda of the forty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On this occasion, I should like to extend a special note of thanks to Ambassador Maycock, who acted as coordinator for the group of Ambassadors who considered this item and arrived at this outcome.

That concludes our consideration of agenda items 109 and 110.

AGENDA ITEM 115

PERSONNEL QUESTIONS

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members may recall that on 20 September 1991 the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the forty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): That concludes our consideration of agenda item 115.

AGENDA ITEM 119

FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS IRAN-IRAQ MILITARY OBSERVER GROUP

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members may recall that on 20 September 1991 the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

(The President)

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the forty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): That concludes our consideration of agenda item 119.

AGENDA ITEM 120 (continued)

FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members may recall that the Assembly has adopted resolutions 46/195 A of 20 December 1991 and 46/195 B of 31 July 1992 on this item. As members know, this item has been included in the provisional agenda of the forty-seventh session of the Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion of this item at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): That concludes our consideration of agenda item 120.

AGENDA ITEM 121

FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS TRANSITION ASSISTANCE GROUP

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members may recall that on 20 September 1991 the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

(The President)

May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the forty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): That concludes our consideration of agenda item 121.

AGENDA ITEM 123

ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members may recall that on 20 September 1991 the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the forty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): That concludes our consideration of agenda item 123.

AGENDA ITEM 138

FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION FOR THE REFERENDUM IN WESTERN SAHARA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members may recall that, on 20 September 1991, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

(The President)

May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the forty-seventh session?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): That concludes our consideration of agenda item 138.

AGENDA ITEM 144 (continued)

REVITALIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members may recall that the Assembly has adopted resolution 46/77 of 12 December 1991 on this item. As members know, the item on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly has been included in the provisional agenda of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion of this item at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): That concludes our consideration of agenda item 144.

AGENDA ITEM 145 (continued)

THE SITUATION OF DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN HAITI

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members may recall that the Assembly has adopted resolution 46/7 of 11 October 1991. As members know, this item has been included in the provisional agenda of the forty-seventh session of the Assembly.

(The President)

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion of this item at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Thas concludes our consideration of agenda item 145.

AGENDA ITEM 148 (continued)

FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS TRANSITIONAL AUTHORITY IN CAMBODIA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members may recall that the Assembly has adopted resolutions 46/222 A of 14 February 1992 and 46/222 B of 22 May 1992. As members know, this item has been included in the provisional agenda of the forty-seventh session of the Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion of this item at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): That concludes our consideration of agenda item 148.

FLOODS IN PAKISTAN

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): May I, on behalf of all the members of the Assembly, extend to the Government and the people of Pakistan, recently struck by floods, our deepest sympathy at this major disaster that has caused tragic loss of life and extensive material damage.

May I also express the hope that the international community will show its solidarity and respond promptly and generously to any request for help.

Mr. MARKER (Pakistan): On behalf of the Government and the people of Pakistan, I thank you, Mr. President, for the sympathy you expressed, on behalf of all the States Members of the United Nations, on the catastrophic floods that have recently occurred in Pakistan and continue their devastation even now as we speak. The people of Pakistan, who are unfortunately no strangers to natural calamities, will continue to face the present tragedy with their customary fortitude and faith in Allah.

(Mr. Marker, Pakistan)

At the same time, we extend our sympathies to the Governments and the peoples of the United States and Nicaragua over the national calamities which they have recently suffered.

We also convey our deep gratitude to you, Sir, and the Members of the United Nations for your expressions of sympathy, and assure you that this feeling of international solidarity, epitomized by the United Nations, will serve as a great encouragement and source of strength to the people of Pakistan in our present difficulty.

CLOSING ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Thankful and appreciative, I wish before the members of the Assembly today to evaluate with you a journey of one full year since you honoured me - thereby affirming the role of Saudi Arabia - by electing me President of the General Assembly. It has been a year full of events that witnessed historic changes of momentous significance.

And here from this rostrum of the highest international forum I also present to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz, a great leader and a man of historic standing, my sincere and deep thanks for the honour he conferred upon me in the name of the Kingdom, and for the confidence that was a source of strength and determination and enabled me to carry out my mission to the satisfaction of my conscience. He has always reinforced the role of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the field of international relations and its standing in the world political arena. The State, the Government, and the people have never faltered in shouldering their responsibilities and carrying out their constructive and generous role in the regional and the international fields.

(The President)

History will commend the gen eration of this era as the generation of the United Nations. And those who wr ite history will commend you, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, for you have e been the active, effective representatives in the United Nations who have str riven to lead it to success. I shall repeat now what I stated in my inaugural statement a year ago when I say that I do not know what situation the world would be in today had the United Nations not been active and effective.

The events that have followed d one upon the other over the past 12 months have changed the trend of history in the second half of the twentieth century, and probably for a long time to co ome.

During the past 44 years, the e balance of terror between the two super-Powers was the deciding fact tor in international relations and an important one affecting dealings a among nations. More than once during those years, we stood on the verge of a devastating nuclear war. But the past 12 months have witnessed decisive cha anges that ended the cold-war era based on the balance of terror and inaugura ated the post-cold-war era, the fundamentals of which we are endeavouring now t o establish on a sound basis of international co-operation. We wi itnessed the disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, one of the two super-Powers in the equation of the balance of terror, and with it the end of the communist theory in the perspective of States and peoples. Thus one of the decisive chapters of history came to an end.

In reality, what we called the e cold war was actually the Third World War, which continued for 44 years and en nded without victor or vanquished, but with winners and losers. During that wa ar, and under its umbrella, in one way or another 127 local or regional wars took place in which a total of 21,800,000 people, at an average of 500,000 pe er year, lost their lives. An average of

(The President)

1,200,000 were wounded every year, and we observed a gradually increasing ratio of civilian casualties. Fifty-two per cent of those killed in the wars of the 1960s were civilians; that figure rose to 73 per cent in the 1970s and 85 per cent in the 1980s.

At this delicate stage, the United Nations stands at the crossroads of history to play its role. Through the General Assembly and the other organs of the United Nations, representatives must stand to shoulder their responsibilities before history. The organs and agencies of the United Nations have until now sufficiently expanded to cover all aspects of human life - from the sea-bed and the core of the earth to outer space and the higher stratosphere, and all that is between them and is of concern to the human being or has an effect on his life.

(The President)

The United Nations today is taking on a serious and special responsibility for finding methods of balancing the resources needed by all peoples and societies to live and for finding ways for them to cooperate in order to give human content - which is the core of the divine will in directing the path of the life of a human being, giving him guidance, and is the channel to his satisfaction and happiness - to the tremendous human progress that is taking place in the fields of research and science, production and industry, commerce and communications.

In speaking about ways of balancing the resources needed to live, I should like to mention, as an illustration, that the world today produces enough food for the entire population of the globe, totalling 5.3 billion human beings, but that 950 million people are nevertheless living permanently below the level of starvation; that the gap between per capita incomes in developing and developed countries has now widened to twice what it was 30 years ago; that the size of the gap in spending on public health has quadrupled in the same period; that during the 30 years from 1960 to 1990, the amount spent on education in developing countries - which have two thirds of the world population - did not exceed 10 per cent of what was spent on education in the world as a whole; that the amount spent in their health sectors did not exceed 5 per cent of what was spent on health in the world as a whole; and that annual world expenditure on military affairs is approximately equivalent to the income of the 2.6 billion people who make up the population of the world's 44 least developed countries.

The world spent on military affairs, during the 30 years from 1960 to 1990, the equivalent of 21 trillion dollars, in 1987 dollars. This is equivalent to the total value of production and services of the whole world last year. Indeed, the rate of growth of military expenditure during the last

(The President)

three decades has exceeded the rate of growth of the world's productive capacity.

Here the divide between the North and the South becomes very evident. I stressed this fact in my inaugural address a year ago, and called the attention of the countries of the North to the damage that could be caused by delay in putting the dialogue between the North and the South onto a viable path towards building a better future.

Also, we see that the world's annual spending on military affairs is 2,900 times its spending on United Nations peace-keeping forces. Here we should pause for a deeper, wider-ranging and more responsible consideration, committing all States, at all costs, to upholding the Charter and respecting its authority and penalties; we must use a single yardstick in dealing with events if we are to save the world, or at least to reduce to a minimum the tragedies of all these regional and local wars, with their vast destruction and losses and their far-reaching repercussions on world stability.

The cold war, or the Third World War, if we may call it that, came to an end this year. There were winners and there were losers, as I have already mentioned. The settling of accounts and the reorganization of positions and roles is now taking place as part of a vigorous race to fill the vacuum in the midst of these simultaneous changes in the world arena, the vacuum left by the cold war battles as they suddenly vanished from the field. This vacuum has also given rise to clear repercussions in the arena of the United Nations in general and the General Assembly in particular, and its after-effects have become evident in the various general trends in the United Nations, especially those pertaining to the interactions between North and South.

This vacuum, which people are moving quickly to try to fill, needs a considered, far-sighted vision of the future of international relations; we

(The President)

should be aware of the effects such a vision could have in supporting the role of the United Nations, for, if a wrong course is chosen that does not take into consideration the changes taking place within regional groups and those beyond them, and the technical and scientific developments that have changed the course and pattern of international interactions, that course will lead to adverse developments like those that brought havoc to States and peoples in recent centuries as late as the middle of this century. It is clear to me that, amongst the most obvious threats to the future of international relations within the United Nations, and consequently in the world at large, are attempts to gain ground and victories quickly now by taking advantage of the vacuum to which I have referred at the expense of the sound equilibrium that should be founded on the clear basis of balanced interests and on respect for principles.

In speaking of the importance of sound balance, I must review - benefiting from the experience of my position - the role of the General Assembly, which is the principal organ of the United Nations by virtue of its composition and its overall responsibilities under the Charter, covering as it does all fields of international concern. All States participate in it at the highest and most eminent levels; the international will is most evident and the world's conscience is reflected in its clearest expression here, and, indeed, it is here where the identity of a State is decided in principle.

Here I would like to remind States of wider influence that exercising their role within the General Assembly in a constructive manner can only bestow international legitimacy on that role - so indispensable in the world of today, the world of the Charter of the United Nations - and that endeavouring to exercise this influence only through partially representative

(The President)

organs with important roles is, in the last analysis, a partial stance needing support within the General Assembly. I must give here a word of caution about any attempt to alter the role of the General Assembly: the General Assembly should take great care, through its members, big and small, to mount a strong defence of its role as bestowed upon it by the Charter, because there is no doubt that any short-sighted attempt to alter the role of the General Assembly would result in a weakening of the whole system of international organizations. In fact, it would be the quickest way to marginalize the role of the United Nations system as a whole.

I say this in order to express to all members my thanks for the great positive response I have had from the great majority, if not all the membership, in cooperating in making our efforts successful and in supporting the role of the General Assembly under the Charter; I thank the Assembly for resolution 46/77 on institutionalizing the Office of the President, which the Assembly approved by consensus, and for its support for the role and facilities of the Office of the President of the General Assembly in the performance of his responsibilities. I hope that members will take great care to ensure that the resolution is implemented and that the next session will witness that implementation and a commitment to carrying it out on the part of all those concerned.

The cooperation which members have so kindly extended to me in dealing with various affairs of great concern and the results we have achieved in many situations have largely proved the ability of the General Assembly to undertake an overall effort in supporting, coordinating, and activating the organs of the United Nations and its organizations.

(The President)

I must put on record my special appreciation to bembers when I state that the General Assembly, for the first time in its history, has held meetings in every month of the year except January and June.

(The President)

Today the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly comes to a close while some of the most serious international problems still cast their shadows or have not yet been resolved.

The Gulf crisis still casts its dark shadow after the removal of the Iraqi occupation from the State of Kuwait and the return of legitimacy to that country. We hope that all the factors and elements that cause doubts and uncertainties and that threaten peace in the region will be eliminated in the shortest time, and that the effectiveness of the United Nations will restore, as quickly as possible, normal conditions in keeping with the best of our hopes: we wish for the State of Kuwait and the people of Kuwait all progress and prosperity.

The problem of Palestine and the Middle East is still being steered towards the unknown, in spite of all the current efforts to reach a solution that could restore the legitimate rights of its people, or to stop the deterioration of those rights and the aggression against them. The deprivation of the people of Palestine of their land and of their legitimate human rights continues: practices in that regard are disclosed every day by international agencies and humanitarian organizations. This state of affairs is a time bomb that threatens world peace, as it goes against the logic of history and the rationale of human relations. If we do not appreciate its dangers to the future for the region and for the world, then history will have no sympathy for those who do not want to hear, to see or to comprehend. The situation will become increasingly serious for the peace of the area, and thus for the peace of the world, should the situation of Palestine and the

(The President)

Palestinians and the situation in the occupied Arab territories continue on this path.

The problem of hunger and starvation in Africa, especially in Somalia, is a serious indicator that the world's potential is not being properly used and that improper priorities are in play. I should like to thank the Secretary-General, the various United Nations agencies and the States that have helped the people of Somalia for the great, effective action now being taken to alleviate this tragedy. I must add, looking to the future, that the problem is wider than that; it is affected to a great extent by the nature of the relationship between the North and the South, and by the question of how to enable the South to feed itself and provide for its own needs. The gulf between the North and the South is among the important factors in the instability in some countries of the South, and members are aware that instability in any of the countries of the South, which are home to two thirds of the world's population, will have a negative effect on life in the North, however much it might try remain aloof.

The problem of the countries of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the problem of the aggression against the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in its ugliness and in its violation of the United Nations Charter, poses a challenge to all the values the Charter commits us to preserve and defend. Two weeks ago, the Assembly adopted a resolution in that context that put matters in their right perspective: the Assembly confirmed its commitment to the preservation of the security, territorial integrity,

(The President)

independence and sovereignty of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and invited the Security Council to enable its people to defend itself, which is a basic international right, and to invoke Chapter VII of the Charter.

May I extend a word of appreciation and congratulation to my friend, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the new Secretary-General, and to wish him health and happiness and success in his great mission and in meeting the weighty responsibilities which I hope he will fulfil completely. He has been playing a constructive role, which makes us confident for his future success and accomplishments.

I should also like to commend his predecessor, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the former Secretary-General, to whom we bid farewell at the end of December, and to recall the beautiful memories and fine impressions he left among his many friends in the United Nations and outside it after 10 years as the Head of the Secretariat, 10 years full of successes that deserve all our appreciation.

I would like to thank all the members of the Secretariat who helped me fulfil my mission, especially the Division of General Assembly Affairs, the Office of Conference Services and the Translation Division, for the distinction they displayed in carrying out their duties and for their sense of responsibility, which deserves thanks and appreciation.

Last but not least, I would like to reiterate congratulations to the 20 countries that joined the United Nations this year. That is the largest number of States to join the United Nations in a single year since the founding Members established the Organization. Their adherence to the world body has enriched the universal character of the United Nations. I wish their peoples and their Governments progress, prosperity and happiness.

(The President)

I thank you, Mr. Secretary-General and members of the Assembly; I join you in applauding the United Nations, all its organs, and all those working for it, and I wish you all success.

AGENDA ITEM 2 (continued)

MINUTE OF SILENT PRAYER OR MEDITATION

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): We are now coming to the end of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I declare closed the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.